Canadian lamb

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Prepared by Food Advisory Division

Lamb — a tender, juicy and distinctively flavored meat — has been an important part of people's diets for many generations. Many different cultures have adapted its preparation to their needs. This has given us a multicultural repertoire of lamb cookery, making it interesting to use on the menu.

Canadian lamb is available all year round but is most plentiful from September to December. For this reason, many Canadians buy in quantity for the freezer. This publication contains recipes that use a variety of lamb cuts.

"Spring lamb" does not refer to the season the animal was born but rather to its age; it is meat from animals 3 to 5 months old. "Lamb", on the other hand, may come from animals up to 12 months old.

Lamb contains important nutrients. It is an excellent source of high quality protein and supplies minerals and B vitamins.

The round "Canada" meat inspection stamp is applied to all lamb carcasses when they are health inspected by federal government veterinarians. Health inspection is mandatory for all meat for interprovincial and foreign trade.

Although grade standards have been established for lamb, grading is voluntary. The top grade, Canada A (red), is subdivided into four categories, Canada A1 to A4, according to the amount of fat covering. The Canada B (blue) and Canada C (brown) grades have less fat covering and/or less muscle development.

Buying

The color of the lean meat varies from light pink to dark brownish pink. Look for meat that is firm, fine grained, smooth and velvety. A thin paperlike covering called the "fell" is found over the fat of all lamb. It can be left on roasts but should be removed from other cuts.

For each serving, buy approximately:

- 150 g boneless roast, stew meat, ground meat, heart or kidney;
- 200 g bone-in roast or chops; or
- 250 g bone-in stew meat.

Storing

Store lamb in the refrigerator no longer than 3 days for chops and roasts, 2 days for ground lamb and 1 day for organ meats. Lamb keeps well in the freezer — up to 8 months for roasts, 5 months for chops and 3 months for ground lamb and organ meats.

Preparation and cooking

Seasoning

Complement the delicate flavor of lamb with herbs and spices such as marjoram, rosemary, thyme, mint, ginger, garlic, oregano or curry powder. Sprinkle them on the meat before cooking or add to the gravy or sauce. Make slits in the tops of roasts before baking and insert slivers of garlic, mint leaves or sprigs of parsley. Serve mint sauce, barbecue sauce, cranberry sauce, grape, currant or mint jelly with lamb. The meat may also be garnished with broiled peach or pear halves, tomatoes or mushrooms.

Lamb chops and steaks

Lamb chops and steaks may be baked, braised, broiled, barbecued, or panfried. Before cooking, snip fat edge of meat. Season and cook until medium (pinkish grey) or well done (brownish grey). Times are for meat at refrigerator temperature (4°C) at the start of cooking.

TO BAKE Place meat on rack in shallow pan. Brush with oil. Bake in center of oven at 160°C.

Timetable for baking lamb chops and steaks

Cut	Thickness (cm)	Cooking time (min)	
		Medium	Well done
Rib and loin chops	1.5	25 – 30	35 – 40
Shoulder chops		40 – 45	60 – 65
Leg steaks		35 – 40	55 – 60
Rib and loin chops	2.5	35 – 40	55 – 60
Shoulder chops		55 – 60	75 – 80
Leg steaks		50 – 60	70 – 75

TO BRAISE Brown meat in oil for required time. Remove meat from pan. For each 250 mL gravy, drain fat, reserving 25 mL. Put in pan, add 25 mL flour to fat and brown; stir in 250 mL liquid (e.g., water, tomato juice). Bring to boil. Return meat to pan. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for required time.

Timetable for braising lamb chops and steaks

Cut	Thickness (cm)	Browning time (min/side)	Cooking time after browning (min/side)
Rib and loin chops	1.5	1 – 2	4
Shoulder chops		1 – 2	5
Leg steaks		1 – 2	11 – 12
Rib and loin chops	2.5	2 – 3	8
Shoulder chops		2 – 3	11
Leg steaks		2 – 3	18

TO BROIL Preheat broiler. Place meat on cold rack of broiler pan at recommended distance from heat. Broil each side for recommended time.

Timetable for broiling lamb chops and steaks

Cut	Thickness (cm)	Distance from heat (cm)	Cooking time (min/side)	
			Medium	Well done
Rib and loin chops	1.5	5	2 – 3	4 – 5
Shoulder chops and leg steaks			3 – 4	5 – 6
Rib and loin chops	2.5	8	5 – 6	7 – 8
Shoulder chops and leg steaks			7 – 8	8 – 9

TO BARBECUE Place on greased grill, 12 cm from heat. Turn once during cooking. If desired, brush frequently with warm marinade or barbecue sauce during last 5 min of cooking.

Timetable for barbecuing lamb chops and steaks

Cut	Thickness (cm)	Cooking time (min/side)	
		Medium	Well done
Rib and loin chops	2.5	5 – 6	7 – 8
Shoulder chops and leg steaks		7 – 8	8 – 9

TO PANFRY Brown meat in oil for 30 s to 1 min each side. Turn, reduce heat and continue cooking until done.

Timetable for panfrying lamb chops and steaks

Cut	Thickness (cm)	Cooking time after browning (min/side)	
		Medium	Well done
Rib and loin chops	1.5	3	5
Shoulder chops		4	6
Leg steaks		3 – 4	5 – 6
Rib and loin chops	2.5	6	8
Shoulder chops		8	9
Leg steaks		8 – 9	11 – 12

Lamb leg, loin and shoulder

Lamb leg, loin and shoulder may be roasted or spit-barbecued. Season and cook until medium or well done. Times are for meat at refrigerator temperature (4°C) at the start of cooking.

TO ROAST Season lamb and place fat-side-up on rack in shallow roasting pan. Insert meat thermometer in center of meatiest part of roast so that the tip is not touching bone or fat. Roast uncovered at 160°C until done or until meat thermometer registers desired internal temperature. Let roast stand about 10 min after removing from oven to make carving easier.

Timetable for roasting lamb

Cut	Weight (kg)	Cooking time (h)	
		Medium	Well done
Leg – whole	2.5 – 3.0	2 – 2¼	2¼ – 2¾
– shank end	1.5 – 2.0	1½ – 2	2 – 2½
– butt end	1.5 – 2.0	1¾ – 2¼	2¼ – 2¾
Loin	1.0 – 1.5	¾ – 1	1 – 1¼
Shoulder	1.5 – 2.0	1½ – 1¾	2 – 2½
	2.0 – 2.5	1¾ – 2¼	2½ – 3
Shoulder, rolled	2.5 – 3.0	2 – 2½	2½ – 3

The internal temperature of lamb roasts should reach 65°C for medium and 75°C for well done.

TO SPIT-BARBECUE Balance roast on spit for even cooking. Season lamb. Place spit so meat is 10 cm from heat and start motor. Half way through cooking raise spit to 12 cm. Cook until meat thermometer registers desired internal temperature.

Timetable for spit-barbecuing lamb

Cut	Weight (kg)	Cooking time (h)	
		Medium	Well done
Leg – whole	2.5 – 3.0	2 – 2¼	2½ – 2¾
– shank end	1.5 – 2.0	1½ – 2	2 – 2½
– butt end	1.5 – 2.0	1¾ – 2¼	2¼ – 2¾

The internal temperature of lamb roasts should reach 65°C for medium and 75°C for well done.

Recipes for newcomers to lamb

These recipes have been developed to appeal to newcomers to lamb. They offer a mild and delicate lamb flavor.

LAMB POCKETS

500 mL cooked lamb, cut in 1 cm cubes (about 350 g)
625 mL finely shredded cabbage
375 mL chopped tomato
175 mL chopped onion
125 mL finely chopped parsley
50 mL fresh lemon juice
2 mL salt
1 mL pepper
2 to 3 large pita bread

Combine all ingredients except pita bread. Cut bread in half. Fill pockets with 300 to 450 mL of mixture. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

LAMB AND LEEK SKILLET

500 mL leeks
1.2 kg lamb leg, cut in 2 cm cubes
50 mL flour
25 mL oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
5 mL salt
1 mL pepper
1 mL thyme
1 mL allspice
1 mL cinnamon
250 mL beef bouillon
3 tomatoes, peeled and quartered
15 mL chopped parsley

Cut a thin slice from root end of leeks and cut off green tops to within 5 cm of white stalk. Remove outside layer, if necessary. Cut in 1 cm slices. Wash thoroughly. Coat lamb in flour. Brown meat in oil. Add garlic and sauté 1 min. Add seasonings and bouillon. Cover and simmer until meat is tender (about 20 min). Add tomatoes and leeks. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender (about 15 min more). Garnish with parsley and serve over rice or noodles if desired. Makes 6 servings.

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MIDDLE EASTERN LAMB STEW

600 g boneless stewing lamb
25 mL oil
1 chopped onion
1 chopped green pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed
5 mL liquid beef bouillon concentrate
1 can (398 mL) tomatoes
1 mL salt
1 bay leaf
1 can (398 mL) kidney beans, drained or 375 mL cooked kidney beans

Trim fat from lamb and cut in 3 cm cubes. Brown meat in oil and remove from pan. Sauté onion, green pepper and garlic until onion is transparent. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer until meat is tender (about 1 h). Serve with pita bread and green onions, if desired. Makes 4 servings.

LAMB WITH CRANBERRY SAUCE

600 g boneless lamb shoulder, cut in 3 cm pieces
25 mL oil
75 mL chopped onion
250 mL beef broth
50 mL barbecue sauce
15 mL lemon juice
5 mL salt
Dash pepper
15 mL cornstarch
25 mL water
250 mL whole cranberry sauce

Brown lamb in oil and remove from pan. Add onion and sauté until onion is transparent. Return meat to pan; add broth, barbecue sauce, lemon juice and seasonings. Cover and simmer until meat is tender (about 1 h). Combine cornstarch with water and add to pan; add cranberry sauce. Stir and simmer until thickened. Serve over mashed potatoes, if desired. Makes 4 servings (200 mL each).

DEVILED LAMB FLANK RIBS

1.3 kg lamb flank ribs
75 mL flour
5 mL salt
2 mL pepper
25 mL oil
15 mL prepared mustard
125 mL chili sauce
50 mL vinegar
15 mL Worcestershire sauce
5 mL paprika
75 mL chopped onion
350 mL water

Trim fat from meat and cut into serving size pieces. Coat meat in flour, salt and pepper; brown in oil. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over lamb. Cover and simmer until tender (about 1 h). Makes 4 servings.

LAMB HORS D'OEUVRES

125 g ground lamb
125 mL chopped onion
125 mL chopped green pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed
250 mL chopped tomatoes
5 mL flour
5 mL chili powder
2 mL salt
24 hot baked tartlet shells

Sauté meat, onion, green pepper and garlic until meat is browned. Drain fat. Add tomatoes, flour, chili powder and salt. Simmer 5 min, stirring occasionally. Fill each tartlet shell with 15 mL lamb mixture. Makes 24 appetizers.

Recipes for lamb lovers

Lamb lovers will appreciate the distinctive lamb flavor enhanced by these seasonings and ingredients.

SCOTCH BROTH

250 g lamb breast or flank, cut in 3 cm cubes
1 clove garlic, crushed
15 mL oil
1.3 L water
10 mL salt
1 mL pepper
1 bay leaf
50 mL pearl barley
125 mL chopped potato
125 mL chopped carrot
125 mL chopped celery
50 mL chopped onion
15 mL chopped fresh parsley

Brown meat with garlic in oil. Drain fat. Add water, seasonings and barley. Cover and simmer 2 h. Skim fat from broth or chill several hours and remove fat. Return meat to broth, and add vegetables and parsley. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender (about 30 min). Makes 4 servings.

IRISH STEW

600 g boneless stewing lamb OR 1 kg bone-in stewing lamb
15 mL oil
250 mL sliced onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
50 mL flour
10 mL salt
Dash pepper
2 mL thyme
500 mL water
4 carrots, cut diagonally in 2 cm pieces
4 potatoes, peeled and quartered

Trim fat from lamb and cut in 3 cm pieces. Brown lamb in oil and remove from pan. Add onions and garlic and sauté until onion is transparent. Return meat to pan, sprinkle with flour and brown again lightly. Add seasonings and water. Cover and simmer 45 min. Add vegetables and cook until vegetables are tender (about 30 min more). Makes 4 servings.

MARINATED LAMB CHOPS

175 mL water
50 mL dry mustard
50 mL soy sauce
5 mL rosemary
2 mL ginger
1 clove garlic, crushed
4 lamb shoulder chops OR 8 loin or rib chops, 1.5 cm thick (about 800 g)

Combine all ingredients except lamb chops. Pour over lamb chops and marinate 8 h or overnight. Snip fat edge of lamb chops at 3 cm intervals. Broil 5 cm from heat (3-4 min each side for medium or 5-6 min each side for well done). Makes 4 servings.

LAMB WITH MAPLE SAUCE

2 kg lamb leg
200 mL Italian salad dressing
125 mL water
15 mL lemon juice
10 mL Worcestershire sauce
5 mL dry mustard
2 mL rosemary
2 mL sage
2 mL dried mint
1 clove garlic, crushed
125 mL maple syrup

Place meat on rack in shallow pan. Combine remaining ingredients except maple syrup and use to baste roast. Roast 1 h 30 min at 160°C, basting often and adding more water if necessary. Drain fat and remove rack. Pour maple syrup over roast. Cover and roast until done (about 45 min more for medium at 65°C or about 1¼ h more for well done at 75°C). Serve meat with sauce from pan. Makes 6 servings.

BARBADIAN LAMB

125 mL sliced onion
125 mL sliced celery
125 mL diced green pepper
15 mL butter or margarine
1 can (540 mL) tomatoes
625 mL cooked lamb, cut in 2 cm cubes (about 350 g)
10 mL curry powder
5 mL salt
Dash crushed chili peppers

Sauté onion, celery and green pepper in butter until onion is transparent. Add remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer 45 min. Serve with hot noodles, if desired. Makes 4 servings (200 mL each).

BRAISED LAMB SHANKS

2 kg lamb shanks
15 mL oil
50 mL flour
500 mL chicken bouillon
6 small onions
1 bay leaf
5 mL paprika
5 mL salt
2 mL pepper
750 mL carrots, cut in 3 cm pieces
250 mL celery, cut in 3 cm pieces
6 small potatoes

Brown meat in oil. Sprinkle with flour, and brown again lightly. Gradually add bouillon. Add onions and seasonings. Cover and bake 1 h at 160°C. Add remaining vegetables. Cover and bake until vegetables and meat are tender (45 – 50 min more). Skim fat before serving. Makes 6 servings.

MINT SAUCE

50 mL vinegar
50 mL hot water
15 mL sugar
50 mL finely chopped mint leaves
OR 2 mL dried mint leaves

Combine all ingredients. Bring to boil and boil 1 min. Let stand 30 min to develop mint flavor. Cool and serve with lamb chops. Makes about 100 mL.

MOUSSAKA À LA CANADIENNE

75 mL chopped onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
10 mL oil
350 g ground lamb
2 mL oregano
2 mL basil
2 mL cinnamon
2 mL salt
0.5 mL pepper
1 can (213 mL) tomato sauce
1 small eggplant (buy 450 g)
Salt
Boiling water
50 mL butter
65 mL flour
2 mL salt
Dash pepper
250 mL milk
75 mL grated parmesan cheese

Sauté onion and garlic in oil until onion is transparent. Add meat and brown. Drain fat. Add seasonings and tomato sauce. Cover and simmer 30 min. Peel eggplant and cut in thin slices. Place eggplant in shallow pan and sprinkle with salt, then cover with boiling water and let stand 5 min. Drain eggplant well. Melt butter. Blend in flour, 2 mL salt and dash of pepper. Gradually add milk. Stir and simmer until smooth and thickened. Remove from heat. Layer half of eggplant in 2 L baking dish (20 cm square). Pour meat sauce over, then top with remaining eggplant. Pour cream sauce over eggplant and sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 180°C until golden brown (35 to 40 min). Cool slightly and cut in squares. Makes 4 servings.

LAMB CHOPS WITH FRENCH ONION SAUCE

1.5 L sliced onions
2 cloves garlic, crushed
25 mL butter or margarine
25 mL flour
2 mL salt
1 mL pepper
Dash nutmeg
250 mL milk or light cream
8 lamb loin chops, 1.5 cm thick (about 800 g)

Cook onions and garlic in butter or margarine over low heat until onions are very soft (about 1 h). Stir in flour and seasonings. Gradually add milk or cream. Stir and simmer until smooth and thickened. Serve hot over broiled or panfried lamb chops. Garnish with parsley, if desired. Makes 4 servings.

BAKED LAMB

4 lamb shoulder chops, 1.5 cm thick (about 800 g)
10 mL Worcestershire sauce
75 mL bread or cracker crumbs
10 mL minced onion
5 mL finely grated lemon rind
5 mL dried parsley
5 mL salt
1 mL pepper

Trim fat from lamb chops and brush with Worcestershire sauce. Combine remaining ingredients. Place chops in 2 L baking dish and cover with crumb mixture. Bake at 160°C until done (40-45 min for medium or 60-65 min for well done). Makes 4 servings.

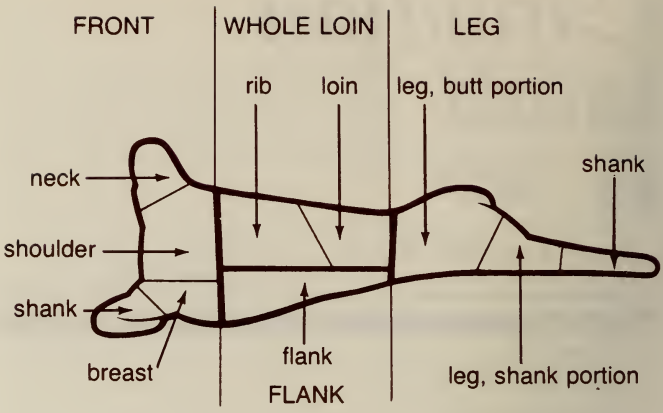
KITCHEN METRICS

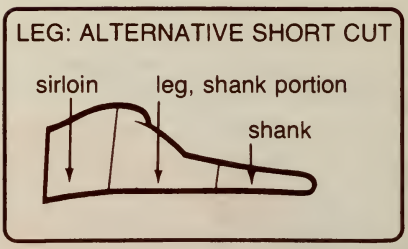
TEMPERATURE

Most commonly used oven temperatures

°C	replaces	°F	°C	replaces	°F
100		200	190		375
150		300	200		400
160		325	220		425
180		350	230		450

Refrigerator temperature: 4°C replaces 40°F
Freezer temperature: −18°C replaces 0°F





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